









By Scott Pendleton

Battle between U.S. President Reagan and Congress over sale of advanced surveillance craft (AWACS) and other equipment to Saudi Arabia begins...

of the United States, considerable opposition exists among some members of Congress. Congress might vote to block all or part of this sale...

AWACS deal: the 'pros'

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article contains excerpts from an article in Saudi Business magazine.

Oil producing facilities are highly vulnerable to air attack. Saudi Arabia wants to develop its air defences to protect its own facilities.

eration to widen the conflict by attacking Saudi oil installations? Assuming eventual resolution of this current crisis...

Saudi Arabian interests

One of the very fundamental obligations of any sovereign government is to provide for the peace, prosperity and happiness of its citizens...

United States' interests

Uninterrupted access to Gulf oil resources is vital to the economies of the West and Japan. Disruption of this critical source of energy would cause these economies unprecedented interruption...

"Where our support is needed is to convince our representatives in Congress that good relations with Saudi Arabia are good for American interests.

Copies of the letter and a position paper were sent to the Jeddah and Dammam groups. Subsequently, the Dammam group proposed to place the ad in the Washington Post.

The advertisement cites Saudi Arabia's responsible role in stabilising the oil market, its anti-communist stance and its support of the dollar.

Following is the memorandum of position circulated among the Riyadh group: - The economies of the free world depend upon access to Gulf oil.

Arabia has been uncooperative by refusing to support Camp David peace negotiations and has somehow manoeuvred the dramatic rise in oil prices that has created U.S. inflation and recession.

So long as the Palestinian issue remains unresolved, Arab-Israeli tension will continue. With the possibility of armed conflict ever present. Any addition of military hardware to either side affects the balance of power.

The Saudis want the AWACS to defend their oil installations. 1,000 miles away from Israel. Were they to deploy the AWACS within range of Israel, they would be easily detected by Israeli radar.

More over, we believe no-one has either a need or right to launch Pearl Harbour-style sneak "pre-emptive" attack. Such attacks will never solve the Arab-Israeli issue.

The United States has a continuing commitment to the independence and security of Israel. It fully supports the integrity of the

state of Israel within the limits of U.N. Resolution 242.... It must, however, also look to its own interests and survival. The Arab-Israeli dispute is not the sole source of tension and potential conflict in the region.

Saudi Arabia, along with the overwhelming majority of Arab states, has grave reservations about the Camp David peace process. So do some allies in Europe.

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Economics of the sale

Saudi Arabia will continue to build its defences either with or without the U.S. Aside from the political issues involved, providing Saudi Arabia its needs from American industry is in America's best economic interests.

urement through economies scale. Efforts of the Carter administration to reduce export of arms failed to gain support from other arms exporting nations.

Within reason, the U.S. should be responsive to the legitimate requirements of friendly nations particularly where other options exist and where acquisition of the hardware and services is inevitable from one source or another.

United States exports to Saudi Arabia now exceed \$5 billion annually -- against imports of Saudi oil costing over \$12 billion. In 1979, Saudi Arabia was the ninth largest source of U.S. imports.

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What if the Congress blocks this sale? The Saudis may cancel the F-15 programme and order French Mirage 4000s or the German-British-Italian Tornado. If no AWACS are provided, they may pump R & D money into the U.K. to upgrade their Nimrod early warning system to the state-of-the-art of AWACS.

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